SHABE BARAAT

The fifteenth of Shabaan in the Light of the Qur'an and Hadeeth

MOULANA FAZLUR RAHMAN 'AZMI

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FOREWORD

The Ummah of Nabi (S.A.W.) is generally facing a crisis of appalling proportions. The general decline in Deeni knowledge and awareness is unprecedented in the annals of Islamic History. Religious strife and torment is being experienced in every corner of the globe. How far and distant the days of the glorious regime of the Sahabah seems when the law of Allah Ta'ala reigned supreme; and peace, tranquillity and sublimity prevailed. When one ponders over the situation, a genuine perception is gained of the great sacrifice and effort required to restore some measure of what has been lost. An even greater realisation is gained of the fact that the severity of the situation is such that only the mercy of Allah Ta'ala and his acceptance of our duas could resolve this sad state of affairs. Thus when a wonderful occasion such as Shabe-Baraat dawns upon us, one realises the tremendous need for the believers to derive maximum benefit and to turn in unison and beg and plead from the Most Merciful of All Those Who Show Mercy.

However it must be understood that Islam is a pure and unadulterated religion in which no form of innovation will be tolerated. Only the application of the Holy Quraan and it's supreme and perfect illustration by our beloved Nabi (S.A.W.) is acceptable in the sight of Allah Ta'ala. Any deviation from this is sure to gain naught but loss and disappointment by it's perpetrators. It was a keen realisation of the fundamental importance of this authenticity and purity of the teachings of Nabi (SAW) to be protected from adulteration that led to the Sahabah and the chosen scholars of the first few centuries of Islam expending untiring efforts towards it's preservation. As the time passed from the demise of Nabi (S.A.W.), so too did the efforts of the enemies of Islam increase in the quest to vanquish the Deen of Allah Ta'ala. One area of effort was a direct attack at the Muslims and the truth of Islam.

A second and perhaps more devious effort was an attack from within. A no-holds barred attempt to adulterate and obliterate the true teachings of Nabi (S.A.W.) so that the name of Islam remained, but the practices carried out under its banner would be foreign and contrary to that revealed to Nabi (S.A.W.). To this end thousands of Ahaadith were fabricated and a threatening situation developed. However, while such devious plots bore fruit against the other religions eg. Christianity (the fabrication of the Trinity, etc.); Islam was protected and the sons of Islam rose to this challenge with great zest and zeal.

With regard to the field of Hadith, one cannot possibly go into the various steps and measures that were taken over the ages in order to protect the authenticity of Hadith and separate the pure from the fabricated. To mention just a few: Ahaadith

were written down from the time of the Sahabah (R.A.) and transmitted likewise; Allah Ta'ala endowed certain chosen servants with exemplary memories, enabling them to memorise thousands of narrations with their chain of narrators; an in-depth study into the life and character of every narrator was made - thus enabling the scholars to establish whether the narrator could be trusted - such studies were recorded and categorised; great distances were travelled at great expense by the scholars, in order to establish the authenticity of even the slightest detail - etc. Based on the results of these exhaustive efforts, Ahaadith were categorised into various levels of acceptability in the light of the general worth of the chain of narrators. It will now be the duty of the general Ummah to accept the rulings of these great scholars in the field of Hadith and to abide by their opinion with regard to the acceptability of the subject matter of the various Ahaadith. Only in this manner can we hope to have a clear conscience with regard to our Deeni practices that they truly stem from the established Sunnah and are not borne from custom and imitation of other ideologies.

A great tragedy is that in recent times, when Islamic knowledge is at such an ebb and when very often emotionalism becomes weightier than spiritualism, many unaware brothers have become victims of the enemies of Islam who are hell-bent on spoiling the true teachings of Nabi (S.A.W.). The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that even certain scholars of Deen have fallen prey to their devious plans. These adulterated practices have even begun to be expounded from the Mimbars of our Masaajid. So great is the problem that some of these practices have become so famous and accepted that nowadays when some Ulama step forward and in the light of the opinions of the scholars of Hadith speak out against such practices, people (sometimes even other scholars) reject these Ulama and turn a deaf ear. Some feel that there is no necessity for these Ulama to take objection. This is a grave attitude indeed. We must understand that no matter how beautiful and well-known a practice may be, its acceptability is dependant on it being established in the light of Shari' evidence.

Moulana Fazlur-Rahman Sahib has by means of this and other such booklets made an effort towards establishing the truth and presenting the true teachings of Nabi (S.A.W) before us. It will now be our duty to appreciate Moulana's efforts by implementing the true Sunnat practices and abandoning any innovations that may have crept into our lives, no matter how popular they are or how pure and religious we consider them to be. It is hoped by means of this treatise that such a view would be adopted, especially with regard to the occasion of Shabe-Bara'at. Let us reiterate the genuine need for us to exert ourselves in Ibaadat and Dua on this occasion and the importance of keeping our religious exertions in conformance

to the Sunnat and to veer clear from that which is not established in the light of authentic Ahaadith. Only then will our efforts bear fruit.

Another important point is that due to this particular field being a technical and complex one and the knowledge of the general masses very scant with regard to its terminology, some of the subject matter of this booklet may prove difficult to understand for many. An attempt has been made to alleviate this difficulty by means of detailed footnotes wherever necessary. However, one should make a genuine attempt to read it with concentration and appreciate its contenis. An appeal is made to the Ulama, if possible, to choose appropriate occasions and read out the contents of this and other such booklets, illustrating and explaining wherever necessary. May Allah Ta'ala accept Moulana's efforts and take much more work from Him. May He also grant us the tawfeeq to accept and practise.

(Translator)

INTRODUCTION

Allah Ta'ala has, due to his infinite grace and mercy, presented to His bondsmen some special occasions wherein they have a golden opportunity of earning the mercy and forgiveness of Allah. Some explicit examples of these special occasions are the month of Ramadaan and Laylatul Qadr. In the same mould is the fifteenth night of Sha'baan. Several Ahaadith extol the tremendous merit of this occasion. Amongst them is the fact that countless people are forgiven by Allah during this blessed night. It is due to this reason that this night is called "The night of Bara'at" (i.e. the night wherein judgement of saviour from Jahannam and punishment is passed).

However, it should be borne in mind that a vast majority of the narrations declaring the benefit and virtue of this night are in fact quite weak.[1] The weakness of most of the narrations regarding the virtue of Laylatul Bara'at is known to many. However, since these narrations are quite numerous and the weakness in

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[1] It should be noted that the veracity of this statement can only be truly appreciated by one familiar with the science governing the principles of Hadith (Usool-e-Hadith). Let us suffice to say that what is meant is that there are certain deficiencies present in one or more of the narrators of some Ahaadith, thus reducing the reliability of these narrations with regards to their authenticity. These deficiencies vary in their natures and severity, thus governing the classification of the particular Hadith (i.e. each chain of narrators has to be studied individually before its classification). While in one instance the deficiency may be that one of the narrators is known to have a weak memory, another case may have the problem that one narrator is a famous liar and fabricator of Hadith. It is quite apparent that the degree of harm in both cases differs. The crux of the matter is that, Alhamdolillah, Allah Ta'ala has endowed certain individuals with exemplary abilities in this field and they have expended tremendous efforts in the classification of Ahaadith with regards to their strengths. We should accept their rulings and abide by its application. One such principle should be noted; In the case where there exists several narrations concerning a particular virtue or benefit despite most of them being weak, the virtue or benefit will still be accepted due to the conjunction of the narrations (i.e. the sheer number of narrations, despite their weakness, lend credence to the authenticity of their subject matter-Translator).

many is not severe, the virtue of this night will be considered authentic due to the sheer number of these narrations. This is the general consensus of the scholars of this field. A study of this book will reveal this quite clearly.

Many fabricated and baseless ideas regarding Laylatul Bara'at have found place in certain books and have been blindly accepted by the masses. The aim of this book is to clearly elucidate in the light of strong evidence, the acceptable and authentic from the baseless.

The foundation of the Shari'at is the Quraan, Sunnah and lives of the Sahabah (R.A.) Whatever is proven from these sources should be implemented, and that which is not proven from the above should be abandoned. The research of the scholars of Tafseer and Hadith is present. Benefit should be derived from these works and in turn conveyed to the masses as well. It is for this reason that this book is being published. May Allah Ta'ala make it a means of benefit and a saviour for all Muslims. *Aameen.*

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SOME AHAADITH CONCERNING SHABE BARA'AT

1. It is reported from Hazrat Mu'adh bin Jabal (R.A.) that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:
"On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan[2] Allah bestows his special attention on His entire creation. He then pardons His entire creation except an idolater and one who harbours enmity." - *Tabrani has recorded this Hadith in Awsat, Ibnu-Hibaan in his Sahih and Baihaqi - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 118 V2, Page 459 V3*

2. It is narrated from Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr (R.A.) that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:
"Allah looks with special attention towards His creation on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan and forgives all his servants except two categories of people; the person who harbours enmity and a murderer." - *Imam Ahmad reports this Hadith with a slightly weak chain of narrators - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 461 V3*

3. It is related from Makhool who narrates from Katheer bin Murrah (R) that Nabi (S.A.W.) said:
"On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah forgives all the inhabitants of the earth except an idolater and one who harbours hatred for others." *Baihaqi has narrated this Hadith and says that it is an acceptable "Mursal"[3] - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 461 V3*

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[2] As is well known, in the Islamic calender, the night precedes the day. Hence the night between the fourteenth and fifteenth of Sha'baan is implied.

[3] Mursal is such a narration wherein a Taabi'e (a Muslim who was not blessed with the sight of Nabi (S.A.W.), but lived during the age of the Sahabah) narrates a statement or action of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) i.e. he does not mention which Sahabah he heard it from. Thus it becomes clear that a gap exists in the chain of narrators. Such a narration in the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik (R) is acceptable. This acceptability will obviously refer to those cases where the Taabi'e concerned is of such high merit that one would expect only good from him. Imam Shaafi and Imam Ahmad (R) also accept the Mursal when it is supported by another narration. This is exactly the case here.

4. It is narrated from Makhool who narrates from Abu Tha'labah (R.A.) that Nabi (S.A.W.) said:
"On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan, Allah devotes special attention towards His bondsmen. He then pardons the believers and grants respite to the disbelievers (i.e. he delays their punishment), and he leaves the spiteful ones as well, until they abandon their spite (malice) (i.e. no decision of their mercy and forgiveness is made until they resolve their differences)." - *Tabrani and Baihaqi have narrated this Hadith. Baihaqi said that this narration is also an unacceptable Mursal*[4] *between Makhool and Abu Tha'labah (R.A.) - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 461 V3*

5. It is reported from Alaa bin Harith (R.A.) that Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) said:
"One night Rasulullah (S.A.W.) woke up and performed Salaah. He prolonged the Sajdah to such an extent that I wondered whether he had passed away. Seeing this, I got up and shook his foot. Perceiving movement, I felt at ease. When Rasulullah (S.A.W.) lifted his head from Sajdah and completed his Salaah, he said:
"O Humairah! Did you think that the Nabi (S.A.W.) had deceived you?" I replied in the negative and said: "I swear in the name of Allah, due to the length of your Sajdah I thought that you had passed away."
Nabi (S.A.W.) said: "Do you know what night this is?" I said: "Allah and his Rasul(S.A.W.) know best." He said: "This is the fifteenth night of Sha'baan. Allah looks at His servants in this night and forgives those who seek forgiveness, shows mercy upon those who seek mercy and delays the decision of those who harbour feelings of hatred for others." - *Baihaqi has narrated this Hadith as well and says that this is also an acceptable Mursal. It is possible that Alaa reported from Makhool also. Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 462 V3*

It is also mentioned in this narration that Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) heard Nabi (S.A.W.) reading this dua in his Sajdah:

أَعُوْذُ بِعَفْوِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوْذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ
سَخَطِكَ وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ لَا أُحْصِيْ ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ
أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلٰى نَفْسِكَ

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[4] This type of Mursal is also referred to as 'Munqati' i.e. a gap exists in the chain of narrators. In this case it means that Makhool did not hear this Hadith from Abu Tha'labah (R.A.) directly but from someone else who in turn heard it from Abu Tha'labah (R.A.). The name of this person is unknown.

TRANSLATION: O Allah, through the agency of your forgiveness, I seek protection from your punishment; I seek protection from Thy anger by means of Thy pleasure; I seek protection in Thee from Thee; I cannot truly praise You as You ought to be praised. You are as You have praised Yourself. - *Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 119 V2*

6. It is narrated from Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) that: Rasulullah (S.A.W.) entered my room. He then removed his clothes (and lay down). Having barely rested, he got up, dressed and left my room. I was overwhelmed by the suspicion that perhaps he had gone to one of his other wives. Hence I followed him and found him at Baqee (the graveyard of Medina) making dua for the forgiveness of the believers. I thought: May my parents be sacrificed for you, I am pursuing my suspicion while you are engaged in the matter of your Lord. I returned hurriedly to my room and was thus quite out of breath. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) soon returned and asked: "Why are you breathing so heavily, Aisha ?" I related the incident as well as my suspicion to Rasulullah (S.A.W.) He then said to me: "O Aisha, did you fear that Allah and His messenger would deal unjustly with you?" Jibraeel (A.S.) came to me and said: "This is the fifteenth night of Sha'baan. Allah emancipates during this night a multitude of people equivalent to the amount of hair on the goats of the tribe of Kalb. However, Allah does not look on this night at an idolater, a person who harbours enmity in his heart, one who severs family relations, a person who wears his trousers below his ankles, a person who disobeys his parents and the consumer of liquor." Rasulullah (S.A.W.) thereafter removed his clothes and asked: "O Aisha, do you permit me to spend the night in Salaah?" I replied: "May my parents be sacrificed for thee (indicating agreement)." Rasulullah (S.A.W.) thereafter began performing Salaah. During the night he made such a lengthy Sajdah that I feared that he had passed away. I therefore got up and felt for him (because there was probably no lamp in the room). My hand touched the sole of Rasulullah (S.A.W.'s) foot, due to which he moved. Having felt this movement, I then felt at ease. During the night I heard him saying ... *(the same dua as mentioned in the previous Hadith)*. In the morning, I mentioned this to Rasulullah (S.A.W.). He advised: "Learn these words and teach them to others. Jibraeel (A.S.) had taught them to me and commanded me to repeat these words during Sajdah." - *Baihaqi has narrated this Hadith - Targhib-wat-Tarhib[5] Page 460 V3*

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[5] Targhib-wat-Tarhib is a kitaab consisting of a collection of Ahaadith compiled by Haafiz Munziri. In his introduction, Haafiz Munziri clearly stated that any riwaayat in his compilation having the following two attributes are weak and unreliable:

1. usage of the word (ruwiya) in the beginning, and

It is probably this very narration that has been concisely narrated in Tirmidhi as follows:

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) says: "I woke up one night and did not find Rasulullah (S.A.W.). I went outside and found him in the Baqee. He said to me "Did you fear that Allah and His messenger would oppress you?" (go to one of the other wives in your turn). I replied "O Rasulullah (S.A.W.), I thought that you had gone to one of the other wives." He then said to me Allah descends[6] to the nearest sky on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan, and He forgives more people than the number of hair on the goats of the tribe of Banu Kalb.' - *Tirmidhi with Al-arfus-shazi Page 156 V1*. Imam Tirmidhi said that Imam Bukhari regarded this narration as da'eef (weak).[7] This narration appears in Ibnu-Majah with the same chain of narrators as well. *(Page 99)*. Razeen has also narrated this Hadith. The narration in Razeen contains the sentence: "Allah forgives more people than the hair on the goats of Banu-Kalb and the forgiven ones were such sinners that they were from those that were destined for Jahannam." - *Mishkaat Page 115*

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2. he does not comment at the end of the Hadith - Introduction Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 37. This Hadith fits the above description and is thus a weak narration. It is recorded in Durre-Manthur that Baihaqi also regarded this Hadith as weak - Durre Manthur Page 27 Volume 6.

[6] It is obvious that a physical descension is not implied, since Allah Ta'ala is omnipresent. In this case and others wherein physical attributes are given to Allah Ta'ala, we refer to these as "Mutashaabihaat." The human mind cannot fully comprehend what is truly meant by this, nor are we required to comprehend it. Our duty is to believe firmly in the truth of its occurrence and to consider that a descension in keeping with the greatness and majesty of Allah does indeed occur. However, the manner of its occurrence is unknown to us.

[7] This riwaayat is weak because one of the narrators, Hajaaj ibn Artaat, is a weak narrator. (He has been branded by the scholars of Hadith as unreliable). Besides he did not hear this Hadith from Yahya ibn Abi Katheer. The narration is therefore Munqati. Imam Bukhari says that Yahya ibn Abi Katheer also did not hear this Hadith from Urwa bin Zubair. Thus there exists two gaps in the chain of narrators. - *Tirmidhi*

7. It is narrated from Abu Musa Ash'ari (R.A.) that on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan, Allah Ta'ala looks at the creation and forgives the entire creation besides the idolators, and the persons who bear spite in their hearts. - *Ibnu-Majah Page 99*. This Hadith is also weak.[8]

8. It is narrated from Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said: "When the fifteenth night of Sha'baan comes, then spend this night in qiyaam (salaah) and the day in fasting, for verily Allah descends during this night to the nearest heavens. This descension commences from sunset (here such a descension is meant which befits the dignity of Allah *(Check Footnote Number 6)*. Allah then announces: Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness so that he may be forgiven? Is there anyone who seeks sustenance so that he may be provided with sustenance? Is there any person who has been stricken with misfortune so that I may relieve him? Many other similar proclamations are made. This continues until dawn." - *Ibnu-Majah p.99; Baihaqi has also narrated the above Hadith in Shu'abul-Imaan; Durre Manthur Lis-Suyuti Page 26 V6.* This Hadith is however very weak.[9] Some scholars have declared it as Mawdhu (i.e. a fabrication).

9. There is a narration from Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (R.A.) that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said: "On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan, Allah Ta'ala descends to the

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[8] One of the narrators is Ibnu-Lahiyah, who has been declared as weak and unreliable. - Tuhfatul-Ahwadhi Page 53 V2. The gradient for acceptance of riwaayaat applied by Dahaak (another of the narrators of this Hadith) is unknown. Furthermore, he did not hear Ahaadith from Abu Musa Ash'ari (R.A.). - Faidhul-Qadeer Page 263 V2

[9] One of the narrators in the chain of narrators of this Hadith is Ibnu-Abi-Jabrah. There is a difference of opinion regarding his actual name. He has been accused of fabricating Hadith. - Taqrib of Ibnu-Hajr Page 396. Imam Ahmad said that he fabricates Hadith. Nasa'i said that his narrations should be abstained from. Ibn Mu'een said that his narrations are baseless. Imam Bukhari and others have also proved him to be weak. - Mizan-ul-I'tidal of Dhahabi Page 503 V4. This Hadith is thus extremely weak. Such a Hadith cannot be relied upon even with regard to the virtues of any action. The fasting of this day should therefore not be regarded as Sunnat as such, since a weak narration is not sufficient to prove this fast as being Sunnat

lowest heaven. He thereafter forgives everyone, besides an idolater and one in whose heart there is hatred for others. - *Durre Manthur Lis Suyuti Page 26 V6.* Hafiz Mundhiri says that Bazzaar and Baihaqi have narrated this Hadith of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.) with an unacceptable chain of narrators. The riwaayat would thus be unacceptable. *Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 459 V3.* However, the strength is not such as to render it free of criticism.[10]

10.Hazrat Uthmaan bin Abil Aas (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said: "On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah descends to the nearest Heaven. Thereafter a proclaimer proclaims: Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone who desires anything so that I may grant his wishes? Allah thus fulfils the requests of all except the adultress and idolater."
- *Baihaqi has reported this Hadith - Durre Manthur Page 27 V6*

11. Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) narrates that on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Rasulullah (S.A.W.) was at her place. It was her turn for Rasulullah (S.A.W.) to spend the night with. She says: "During the night I did not find Rasulullah (S.A.W.) due to which I felt a sudden twinge of suspicion, an occurrence not uncommon with women. I covered myself with my sheet and looked for Rasulullah (S.A.W.) at the homes of his other wives, but I did not find him there. When I returned to my room, I saw Rasulullah (S.A.W.) engaged in Sajdah. In his Sajdah he was saying:

سَجَدَ لَكَ خَيَالِيْ وَسَوَادِيْ وَآمَنَ بِكَ فُؤَادِيْ فَهٰذِهٖ يَدِيْ
وَمَا جَنَيْتُ بِهَا عَلٰى نَفْسِيْ يَا عَظِيْمُ يُرْجٰى لِكُلِّ عَظِيْمٍ
يَا عَظِيْمُ اغْفِرِ الذَّنْبَ الْعَظِيْمَ سَجَدَ وَجْهِيْ لِلَّذِيْ خَلَقَهٗ
وَشَقَّ سَمْعَهٗ وَبَصَرَهٗ

<u>TRANSLATION</u>: **My body and innermost thoughts have prostrated before Thee. And my heart has brought faith on Thee. I implore You, placing in front those sins with which I have transgressed upon my soul. O Mighty One who is yearned for at the time of every enormous task. Oh Mighty One, forgive my great sins. My face has prostrated before He who created it. And granted it the faculty of hearing and sight."**

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[10] There is an unknown narrator in the chain of narrators and the Hadith is Munqati (there exists a gap in the chain of narrators - See Footnote Number 4).

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) lifted his head and then went into Sajdah for a second time and said :

أعوذ برضاك من سخطك وأعوذ بعفوك من عقابك
وأعوذ بك منك أنت كما أثنيت على نفسك أقول
كما قال أخي داود أعفر وجهي في التراب لسيدي وحق
له أن يسجد

__TRANSLATION__: O Allah, I seek protection from Your anger by means of your pleasure; through the agency of Your forgiveness, I seek protection from Your punishment; I seek protection in Thee from Thee; I cannot truly praise You as You ought to be praised. You are as You have praised Yourself. I implore You in the same manner that my brother Dawood (A.S.) did. I place my face in the sand before My Master whose greatness demands that He be prostrated in front of.

He thereafter lifted his head and said:

اللهم ارزقني قلبا تقيا من الشر نقيا
لا جافيا ولا شقيا

__TRANSLATION__: O Allah! Grant me a pious heart, free from evil. Do not make me hard-hearted and deviated.

After completing this Salaah, he came to sleep with me under the sheet. I was breathing heavily. He asked: "O Humairah, why are you out of breath? I informed him of what had transpired. He gently passed his hands over my knees and said: These knees have carried a great burden today. This is the fifteenth night of Sha'baan. During this night, Allah forgives all His bondsmen besides an idolater and the person who harbours hatred for others." - *Durre Manthur Page 27 V6*
The condition of this narration is not known.

__NOTE 1__:
None of the narrations regarding the excellence of this night of Bara'at are void of criticism and comment by the scholars of Hadith. Moulana Yusuf Binouri (R)

says: "I have not come across any Sahih, Marfoo', Musnad[11] Hadith regarding the excellence of this night.' - *Ma'aarifus Sunan Page 419 V5*

The Muhaddith, Ibnu-Dihya, has also agreed that neither has anything authentic been narrated regarding the fifteenth night of Sha'baan nor has any specific Salaat been narrated for this night via reliable narrators. - *Faydhul-Qadeer - Sharhul Jaamius-Sagheer Page 317 V2*

An overview of the various narrations regarding this night lends credence to the acceptability of the virtue of this night. The reason being that although these narrations are weak, they are numerous and narrated by a number of Sahabah. Some are such that not much criticism has been levelled at their Sanad (chain of narrators). Ibnu-Hibbaan has included some of these narrations in his "Sahih" and Hafiz Mundhiri has remarked regarding the Sanad of some that "LA BA'SA BIHI" (it is acceptable). Therefore, according to the principal of the Muhadditheen, the excellence of the night of Bara'at is proven from a conjunction of all these narrations. **(Check Footnote Number 1)** This is the general consensus of the Muhadditheen and Fuqaha, and this is correct.

Even Allamah Ibnu-Taymiyyah, a scholar notorious for refuting such things, also accepts the virtue of the night of Bara'at. He says: "So many Ahaadith and reports exist regarding the excellence of the fifteenth night of Sha'baan that one is compelled to accept that this night does possess some virtue." Some of the pious predecessors used to specially devote this night for Salaah. - *Faydhul Qadeer Page 317 V2*

Moulana Abdur Rahman Mubarakpuri writes in his commentary of Tirmidhi: "The sheer number of Ahaadith regarding this night serves as proof against those people who refute the excellence of this night. - *Tuhfatul-Ahwazi Page 53 V2*

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[11] Musnad - A narration with a complete chain of narrators from the reporter right till the original source.
Marfoo' - A narration containing the speech of Nabi (S.A.W.). This term is used in contrast to Mauqoof (saying of a Sahabah), and Maqtoo (saying of a Taabi'e).
Sahih - An authentic and reliable narration fulfilling all the requirements of acceptability laid down by the scholars of Hadith. Eg. All the narrators are reliable, etc. This term is also comprehensive and inclusive of the above two. *(Translator)*

We should therefore not fall prey to the deception of a few zealots, who completely reject this night. We should instead derive maximum benefit from this night.

MAY ALLAH TA'ALA GRANT US TAWFEEQ.

NOTE 2 :

The virtue of this night that is established from these Ahaadith is that from the very beginning of the night Allah turns with special mercy and attention towards the creation and forgives those who repent and seek forgiveness. Every Muslim should therefore value this night. Turn towards Allah with sincere regret and shame over sins committed and make a promise never to return to sin again and seek forgiveness from Allah. Seek forgiveness for oneself and the rest of the Muslims, living and deceased. Have the firm hope and resolution in the heart that Allah will surely show mercy and forgiveness.

UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE

It is understood from the Ahaadith that even on this night, some servants of Allah are deprived of His forgiveness. They are as follows:

1. idolators
2. those who harbour enmity against others
3. consumers of alcohol
4. those who disobey their parents
5. those who wear their trousers, kurtas, lungis, etc. below their ankles;
6. those who commit adultery and murderers
7. and those who sever family ties.

We can thus gauge the severity of these sins and the need to perpetually abstain from them as they are so grave that even on an occasion when Allah's mercy comes to the fore, they still pose an obstacle to our forgiveness.

Every Muslim should consider carefully and if he is involved in any of these sins, he should sincerely repent and seek forgiveness for his sin lest he be deprived of this night. Another important point is the fact that those sins which deal with the rights of our fellow men (Huqooqul Ibaad), will not be forgiven by Allah until forgiveness has not been sought from the one who has been harmed and a genuine effort to redress the wrong committed against him has not been made.

Oh Allah, forgive us and the rest of the believers, the living amongst them and the deceased.

THE SPECIAL VIRTUE OF THE NIGHT OF BARA'AT

The special virtues of the night of Bara'at are:

1. Contrary to other nights wherein the last third of the night has special blessings and Allah descends to the lowest Heaven during this section of the night, on the night of Bara'at the special rain of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah begins to shower down right from the beginning of the night and continues right up till dawn.

2. The sins of countless of people are pardoned. As already mentioned, Allah's descension during this night to the nearest Heaven occurs from the very beginning, unlike the other nights. Furthermore, the number of pronouncements seeking out those who want forgiveness far supercede those which occur on other nights. *(This is the opinion of Hafiz Zaynud-deen Iraqi - Faydhul Qadeer Page 317 V2)*

It should be remembered that while all the narrations regarding the night of Bara'at are weak, the narrations regarding Allah's descending to the nearest Heaven during the last third of every night are totally correct.[12] It should therefore be understood in this manner, that Allah has bestowed upon his grateful servants a chance to earn His mercy and forgiveness every night. How unfortunate are we that we fail to capitalise on this wonderful opportunity that frequents us every night. We are very sinful, and this is our attitude whereas Rasulullah (S.A.W.), who was sinless, used to get up during the nights and perform Salaat of lengthy qiraat, rukus and sajdahs. The Ummah should never forget this Sunnat of Rasulullah (S.A.W.). Consider the following Ahaadith:

[12] The point being that when one is imbibed with a spirit to exert oneself on the night of Bara'at because of the virtues, then considering the fact that the special virtue of the last third portion of every night is a much more accepted and proven one, it is logical that ones exertion in this direction should be even greater. May Allah grant us the Tawfeeq.

RASULULLAH'S (S.A.W.) IBAADAT EVERY NIGHT

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.) reports that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said: "Almighty Allah descends to the nearest Heaven during the last third of every night. He then proclaims: "Is there anyone who will make dua unto me so that I may accept his dua? Is there anyone who will ask of Me so that I may grant him? Is there any who desires forgiveness so that I may forgive him?" - *Bukhari Page 153; Muslim Page 258 V1.*
The narration of Muslim contains this addition: "He thereafter spreads out his hands and says: "Who will grant a loan to a being who is neither in need of it nor is he an oppressor." - *Mishkaat Page 109.*

Amar bin Absah reports that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:
"Allah is nearest to His bondsmen during the last portion of the night. If you have the ability, then make dhikr (remembrance) of Allah during this time." - *Tirmidhi has quoted this Hadith and remarked that it is "Hasan Sahih Ghareeb" - Mishkaat Page 109.*

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) reports that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) used to go to bed during the first portion of the night and he would stay awake the last portion of the night (i.e. he used to spend this portion of the night in Ibaadat) - *Bukhari and Muslim, Mishkaat Page 109*

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) says that in Ramadaan as well as in other months Rasulullah (S.A.W.) would never perform more than eleven raka'ats of Salaah (i.e. referring to his Tahajjud and Witr). He would first perform four raka'ats, the sheer magnificence and length of these raka'ats is beyond words. He would then perform another four raka'ats of resplendent beauty and length (i.e. the raka'ats were both excellent and long). He would thereafter read three raka'ats (of Witr). - *Bukhari Page 154 V1*

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) says that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) used to perform such lengthy Salaat that his feet would swell. Sometimes she would say that his feet would crack. When it would be asked of him: "Why do you strain yourself so much whereas your past and future errors have been forgiven?", he would reply: "Should I not be a grateful servant?" - *Bukhari Page 716 V2, Page 152 V1.* The recitation of the dua mentioned in Hadith numbei 5 is also proven for Tahajjud Salaah. - *Muslim Page 192 V1*

Hazrat Umar (R.A.) used to wake up his wives as well during the last portion of the night so that they also may perform Salaat. He would then recite the verse

"And command your family members regarding Salaah and you also remain steadfast thereon. We seek not sustenance from you but in fact We sustain you and provide for you. Verily the favourable outcome awaits the pious." *(Surah 20 Verse 132)*

There are many similar authentic narrations from which it is understood that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) was extremely particular regarding the performance of Salaah during the nights. He would vehemently command the companions to do likewise. They also were very particular with regard to Tahajjud Salaat. In fact, the Quraan also attests to this.

Let us reiterate that while it is indeed commendable that the many weak Ahaadith narrated regarding the excellence of the night of Bara'at creates an urge within us to exert ourselves in Ibaadat on this night, we should realise that the above-mentioned strong Ahaadith should definitely engender within us an even greater urge to do likewise every night. Consider especially the fact that Allah descends to the lowest Heaven during the last portion of every night. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) and the Sahabah (R.A.) were very particular regarding this and encouragement towards it is present in the Quraan and Hadith. Nevertheless, we must understand that no Ibaadat should be carried out as a customary practice or in prescribed formulas that have no basis in Shari'ah.

VISITING THE GRAVEYARD ON THE NIGHT OF BARA'AT

Rasulullah's (S.A.W.) awakening during the night and visiting the graveyard is recorded in some of the previously mentioned Ahaadith. However, visiting of the graveyard is not a special characteristic of this night. Instead, it is proven from another authentic narration that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) would visit the graveyard during the last portion of every night.

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) narrates that whenever it was her turn for Rasulullah (S.A.W.) to spend the night with, he would visit the Baqee (graveyard of Madinah) and would say:

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَاَتَاكُمْ مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ غَدًا مُؤَجَّلُوْنَ

وَاِنَّا اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُوْنَ اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِاَهْلِ بَقِيْعِ الْغَرْقَدِ

"Peace be upon you O dwellers of the Muslim graveyard. Death, which was promised to you has indeed befallen you. You are already journeying towards tomorrow (the Hereafter). Verily, if Allah wills, we will also join you. O Allah, forgive the inmates of Baqee." - *Sahih Muslim Page 313 V1*

Imam Nawawi writes "From this it is learnt that visiting the graveyard, greeting its inmates and making dua of forgiveness and mercy for them is Mustahab (desirable)." - *Sahih Muslim Page 313 V1*

There is another Hadith in the Sahih Muslim wherein Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) explains a similar subject matter as was seen in the narration concerning the night of Bara'at. (It is a generally accepted fact that all the Ahaadith in Muslim Shareef are authentic.) She says: "Rasulullah (S.A.W.) once entered my room when it was my turn for him to spend the night with. He placed his sheet aside, removed his sandals and kept them at his feet. He spread the edge of his lungi over the bedding and lay down. He lay still until he thought I had fallen asleep. He then took his sheet slowly, wore his shoes and gently opened the door, and (as he left), closed the door very gently. I also dressed, donned my veil and left behind him. He went to Baqee where he remained standing for a long time. He thereafter raised and dropped his hands thrice and returned. I also returned. He was walking fast and I did the same in order not to be detected. I hastened my pace in conformance to his and thus reached home before him. Just as I lay down, he entered the room. He asked: O Aisha, why are you breathing so heavily? I replied that there was nothing to it. He said: Tell me otherwise Allah will inform me. I replied: May my

parents be sacrificed for thee and then related the entire incident to him. He asked: Are you the same person I saw in the distance? I replied in the affirmative. He gave me a slight push with his fist in my chest, the effect of which I felt, and he asked once again: Did you think that Allah and His Rasul (S.A.W.) would oppress you? I replied: No matter how much people try to hide something from you, then too Allah informs you. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) then said to me Jibraeel (A.S.) came to me. He secretly called me. I also secretly answered him (this concealment was due to the fact that) he does not enter the room when you have removed your clothes. I thought that you had fallen asleep and did not desire to awaken you. Besides, I feared that you would become scared. Jibraeel (A.S.) said to me: Your Lord commands you to visit the inmates of Baqee and make dua for their forgiveness. Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) questioned Rasulullah (S.A.W.) as to what he recited there. He replied: Say (the following dua):

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلٰى اَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَيَرْحَمُ
اللّٰهُ الْمُتَقَدِّمِيْنَ مِنَّا وَالْمُتَاَخِّرِيْنَ وَاِنَّا اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ بِكُمْ لَلَاحِقُوْنَ

<u>**TRANSLATION:**</u> **Peace be upon the believing (Mu'min) inhabitants of the home and may Allah shower mercy upon the deceased amongst us and those whose death still awaits them. And verily, if Allah wills, we will soon join you."** - *Sahih Muslim Page 314 V1*

There is no specific reference in this Hadith to the night of Bara'at or any other night. Furthermore, it is understood from the previous Hadith that whenever it was Hazrat Aisha's (R.A.) turn for Rasulullah (S.A.W.) to spend the night with, he would visit the graveyard. Thus a wide and general application of this practice is understood. Aside from visiting the graveyard on the night of Bara'at, we should ponder as to what extent our practice conforms to the authentic Ahaadith of Nabi (S.A.W.). Are we following a norm, or are our actions truly spurred by an intention to follow the Sunnah? The turn of Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) occurred once every week. It can thus be concluded from the above riwaayat that Nabi (S.A.W.) would visit the graveyard a minimum of once a week.

Hazrat Buraidah Aslami (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:
"I originally prohibited you from visiting the graves, however I now advise you to visit the graves." Another Hadith on the topic adds that this will cause you to remember death. - *Sahih Muslim Page 314 V1.*
This Hadith does not restrict the visit to either day or night. We should therefore visit the graveyard whenever we have an opportunity. Remember death and make dua for the forgiveness of the deceased. We should not suffice with visiting the

graveyard on the night of Bara'at and thereafter neglect this virtuous act during the rest of the year. In the Hadith, no specific day e.g. Friday, Thursday, etc., has been reserved for the visiting of the graves. We should therefore abstain from giving any particular day significance for this practice.

THERE IS NO SPECIFIC PRESCRIBED SALAAH RESERVED FOR THE NIGHT OF BARA'AT

Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri (R) has agreed that the significance of the hight of Bara'at is proven. There is however no proof for those weak and unacceptable narrations mentioned in certain books. - *Alarfus-Shazi Page 156*

Allamah Yusuf Binnouri (R) writes in Ma'arifus-Sunan that Abu Talib Makki recorded these narrations in his book Qutul-Quloob. Imam Ghazali, following Abu Talib Makki, did the same and Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani has followed them in his book Ghunyat-ut-Talibeen. They mention a narration of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that discusses a Salaah of one hundred raka'ats. However, Ibnu-Jawzi (R) and others declared this narration to be a fabrication (Mowdhu') - *Page 419 V5*. Allamah Dhahabi, Ibnu-Arraq, Suyuti, Mulla Ali Qari and other scholars of Hadith have vehemently refuted such Namaazes. (Those who desire further references should consult the books of Mowdhu'aat - fabrications.)

N.B. Imam Dhahabi says regarding the book Ghunya-tut-Talibeen that although it is the work of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, many additions were made to his book after his death. - *Taqreer Moulana Shabeer Ahmad Uthmani, published by Jamea Islameah Dhabel Page 277.* The above book therefore cannot be relied upon. As far as Hadith is concerned, the opinion of the scholars of Hadith (Muhadditheen) is always considered and not that of Waa'izeen and Sufis.[13]

Mulla Ali Qari has discussed this matter under a special chapter regarding the prescribed Namaazes of the night of Bara'at. After mentioning these Namaazes, he declares them to be unfounded and therefore writes that these Namaazes were first introduced in the fourth century in Baytul-Muqaddas and thereafter Ahaadith were fabricated in order to support these baseless formulae. - *Mowdhu'aate-Kabeer Page 330 Beirut edition, also see Tadhkiratul-Mowdhu'aat of Fattni Page 45*

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[13] No disrespect is intended towards the Masha'ikh of Tasawwuf, etc. The point mentioned is that the opinions of the scholars specializing in a particular field is always given preference over others, when that field is under discussion. Therefore, in the matters of the acceptance or rejection of narrations, the opinion of the Muhadditheen will always come first.

FASTING ON THE FIFTEENTH OF SHA'BAAN IS NOT ESTABLISHED FROM HADITH

Some people are of the misconception that fasting on the fifteenth of Sha'baan is Sunnat. They have been deceived by the Hadith of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) that appears in Ibnu-Majah. This narration is totally unreliable. An interesting point is that fasting on this day is only discussed in this weak Hadith. No other narration regarding any significance of fasting on this day is found. This Hadith is Hadith number 8 that passed. It was also mentioned in the footnote under the hadith that one of its narrators, Ibnu-Abi-Sabirah, is a very weak narrator and has been accused of fabricating Hadith. - *Mizanul-I'itidal of Dhahabi Page 503 V4.* No action can be proven as Sunnat on the basis of such a weak Hadith.

The author of Durre-Mukhtar writes that the condition (pre-requisite) for practising upon a weak Hadith is that:

1. The weakness of the Hadith is not severe (i.e. the factors contributing to its weakness are not severe).
2. The action enjoined or prohibited in the Hadith should be in keeping with the general practise of the Shari'ah, i.e. it must not be something new that nobody has heard of before and has no basis in Shari'ah.
3. The act established from the weak Hadith should not be regarded or referred to as Sunnat. - *Durre-Mukhtar-Ma'-Shami - Numaniyyah Edition Page 87 V1*

Allamah Shami explains in the commentary of this excerpt that an example of severe weakness would be when at least one of the narrators of the hadith is a liar or accused of fabricating Hadith. (This factor is found in this Hadith as already explained.) He thereafter quotes from Imam Suyuti that at no time of practising on such a Hadith should it be regarded as proven. *(Ibid)*

This Hadith is extremely weak and it is not even narrated by any other chain of narrators.[14]

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[14] Ahaadith are more often than not found narrated by more than one chain. An explanation of this is as follows : Two or more Sahabah (R.A.) may have heard the Hadith from Nabi (S.A.W.). Each Sahaabi may then teach it to several students, each student in turn may have several students. Thus one can quite easily see how the chain multiplies. Even if only one Sahabi (R.A.) reports the Hadith, the chains could still be many, as he could have many students.

As previously mentioned, the weakness of a Hadith is sometimes alleviated by a study of any other chain of narration from which this

Fasting on this day therefore cannot be regarded as Sunnat, it could be regarded as Nafl only. If fasting on this day be regarded as Sunnat, this will result in attributing to Rasulullah (S.A.W.) something which cannot be proven from him and this could be very dangerous. Nabi (S.A.W.) said: "Abstain from reporting (attributing) Hadith from me except concerning that (Hadith) which you have knowledge of (are certain of its authenticity). He who attributes a lie to me should prepare his abode in Hell." - *Mishkaat.*

Baihaqi has quoted a narration in Shua'bul-Imaan which discusses a Namaaz of fourteen raka'ats, after which Surah Fateha, Surah Ikhlaas, Surah Falaq, Surah Naas, Ayatul Kursi, etc. should be read fourteen times each. The following day (fifteenth of Sha'baan) should be spent in fasting. The reward of fasting on this day being equivalent to two years of fasting. Baihaqi thereafter quotes Imam Ahmad's statement that this Hadith seems to be a fabrication and it is "Munkar" (unacceptable).

Amongst its narrators is Uthmaan bin Saeed and others who are unknown.
- *Shua'bul-Imaan of Baihaqi Page 387 V3.*[15]

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi, after quoting this Hadith, quotes similar remarks regarding it and thereafter writes that Jawzani has regarded this Hadith as baseless and Ibnu-Jowzi has regarded it as a fabrication and says that the chain of narrators of this Hadith is obscure. - *Ma-Thabata-bis-Sunnah Page 213.*

The Significance of the 15th night gains credibility due to the various ahaadith discussing the topic. Fasting on the 15th day is however narrated in **only** one hadith which besides being weak is narrated by only **one** chain of narrators. There is therefore no question of this fast gaining any strength on the basis of its being more than one chain of narrators. (Translator)

Hadith is narrated. Sometimes, while one chain may be weak, the others are found to be acceptable or the Hadith gains strength by the sheer number of chains by which it is reported. (Translator)

15) I have seen this book in Madinah Munawwara. This Hadith has been quoted directly from the original.
(This book is now available in the Darul-Uloom library - Azaadville)

FASTING DURING THE MONTH OF SHA'BAAN IS SUNNAT AND A CLEARLY ESTABLISHED PRACTICE OF SHARI'AH

Fasting in the month of Sha'baan, without the stipulation of any day, is proven from Rasulullah (S.A.W.). In fact, he used to fast excessively during this month.

Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) describing the fast of Nabi (S.A.W.) says that aside from the month of Ramadaan, he never used to fast for the entire month. However, of the remaining eleven months, he would fast in Sha'baan the most. - *Bukhari Page 264 V1.* Although it is mentioned in some narrations that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) would fast throughout the entire month of Sha'baan, however the famous scholar of Hadith, Abdullah bin Mubarak, explains that these Ahaadith refer to fasting the major portion of the month. General Arabic usage permits a person to refer to the majority of the month spent in fasting as being the entire month. - *Tirmidhi Page 155*

Ibnu-Abbas (R.A.) has also narrated that besides the month of Ramadaan, Rasulullah (S.A.W.) never spent the entire portion of any month in fasting. To fast excessively during the month of Sha'baan would therefore definitely be in conformance to the Sunnat of Rasulullah (S.A.W.).

However, one should not fast during the second half of Sha'baan if one fears that one might become weak, thus putting off the fast of Ramadaan. Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) has said: "Do not fast during the second half of Sha'baan." - *Tirmidhi Page 155.* Imam Tahawi has interpreted the prohibition in the above Hadith to be based on compassion and sympathy. He writes that the person who fears weakness (due to excessive fasting in Sha'baan) will be well advised not to fast during the second half of Sha'baan so that he may be able to keep the compulsory fast of Ramadaan without any strain. - *Sharhu-Ma'anil-Aathaar Page 289 V1*

Similarly, it will not be correct to fast during the last one or two days of Sha'baan, if such a fast is kept with the intention that should Ramadaan have already started, (and no one saw the moon) then I will not be missing any of its fasts. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) had prohibited this.[16]

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[16] The wisdom behind such a prohibition is quite apparent. Some may start out keeping fast on the 29th or 30th of Shabaan with this in mind that it may perhaps be Ramadaan. Others may add to this and fast on the 28th also. While others may soon begin to

Yes, if it is a person's habit to fast at the end of every month or during a specific day of the week and that day occurs at the end of Sha'baan, then such a person will be permitted to fast during the last days of Sha'baan since such a fast would not be kept on account of Ramadaan.

Similarly, the general masses would not be permitted to fast on the day of "Shak" (doubt). They should instead wait until noon. If by then no news of the moon is received, they should continue eating, etc. Ulama, Muftis and other special people would however be permitted to fast on this day with the intention of Nafl. *(Durre-Mukhtaar-Ma'-Shami Page 87 V1*

NOTE: The day of Shak refers to the 30th of Sha'baan when, due to overcast conditions on the night preceding it, one is placed in doubt over the sighting of the moon.

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consider these fasts as compulsory or important. The result is that an unproven practise would become introduced. When the Shari'ah has not made it difficult for us, why do we bring difficulty upon ourselves ? *(Translator)*

THE NIGHT OF BARA'AT AND THE QURAAN

Has the night of Bara'at been mentioned in the Quraan? The most correct opinion is that the night of Bara'at has not been mentioned in the Quraan.

Allah Ta'ala says in Surah Dukhan: "By the oath of the clear Book (the Holy Quraan). Verily We revealed it (Holy Quraan) in a blessed night. Verily We are the Warners. On this night the decision of every matter of wisdom is passed and established." - *Verses 2-5.*

The words "blessed night" in the above verse refers to Laylatul Qadr which occurs in the last ten days of Ramadaan. Laylatul Qadr has been called "a blessed night" because unlimited Divine blessings descend upon the creation on this night. As mentioned in Surah Qadr, the Quran was revealed in this night. Similarly, it is mentioned in Surah Baqarah (Verse 23) that the Quraan was revealed from the Lawhe-Mahfuz (a protected tablet in the Heavens) to the lowest Heaven, in the month of Ramadaan.

The meaning of the above-mentioned verse from Surah Dukhan would therefore mean that on the night of "Qadr" the details of all those who will die or receive sustenance, etc. during the forth-coming year are transmitted from the Lawhe-Mahfuz to the Angels. - *Ibnu-Katheer.* This is the opinion of most commentators of the Quraan such as Ibnu-Abbas, Qatadah, Mujahid, Hasan Basri, etc. Scholars such as Imam Nawawi have also accepted the authenticity of this opinion. Hafiz Ibnu-Katheer writes that those like Ikramah, who have explained the "blessed night" in the above verse as the night of Bara'at are very distant from the correct interpretation. The reason being that the aayat refers to the night of the revelation of the Holy Quraan, which has already been proven to be Laylatul Qadr. - *Ibnu-Katheer in the Tafseer of Surah Dukhan, Ma'arifus-Sunan Page 420 V5, Ma'ariful Quraan Page 757 V7.* Ibnu-Katheer writes further that there is a Hadith attributed to Uthmaan bin Muhammad that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said: "The ages of people (i.e. whether they live further) are decided from Sha'baan to Sha'baan. A person marries and is even blessed with a child, yet his name is amongst those who are to die (and he is completely unaware)."
This Hadith is however Mursal and cannot b[illegible] given credit when its subject matter directly contradicts that which has been e[illegible]hed from the Quraan. (i.e. that these decisions are passed to the Angels on [illegible]ul Qadr and not on the night of Bara'at). Qazi Abu Bakr bin Arabi writes th[illegible]e is no reliable Hadith regarding the fifteenth of Sha'baan from which it may [illegible]nderstood that sustenance, life and death are decided on this night. He has eve[illegible] so far as to say that there isn't any reliable narration concerning this nig[illegible] a blessed one. - *Ma'ariful*

Quraan Page 757 V7. Since the significance of the night of Bara'at has been mentioned in a number of weak narrations, and the narrations are not in conflict with any verse of the Quraan or any authentic narration, we do accept its significance. However, the opinion that sustenance, death, etc. are determined on this night is in conflict with the Quraan and is therefore unacceptable. It is on this account that the research scholars have always rejected this opinion. The opinion of the lecturers would not be considered in this discussion, instead the opinion of the scholars of Tafseer and Hadith would be considered.

A Hadith that is attributed to Ibnu-Abbas (R.A.) states that sustenance, life and death are decided on the night of Bara'at and this information is transmitted to the Angels on the night of Qadr. - *Ruhul-Ma'ani.* However, this Hadith is unreliable since its chain of narrators are unknown.

There is a Hadith of Hazrat Aisha (R.A.) mentioned in Mishkaat *(Page 115)* on the authority of Baihaqi's Da'waatul-Kabeer. This Hadith discusses that decisions are passed on this night regarding those that will be born, those that will die, the actions of man are placed in front of Allah and sustenance is revealed. The condition of this Hadith is unknown and it is possible that the scholars of Tafseer and Hadith do not consider it reliable.

SOME STRANGE AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH SHABE-BARA'AT

The occasion of Shabe-Bara'at has become synonymous with some baseless beliefs and practices to mention just a few:

1. BURNING BRIGHT LIGHTS AND LANTERNS:
Shah Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi **[Rahimahumullah]** writes that an evil bid'at that takes place quite commonly in India is the lighting of lanterns, etc. These are hung in the homes and on walls and people boast about the number of lights they have lit. Furthermore they gather in large numbers around these lights and engage in vain and sinful amusements. It is quite apparent that there is absolutely no religious basis for such a practice. No mention of it can be found in any Hadith (whether strong or fabricated), nor in any of the various Islamic books. An interesting point is that this particular bid'at is seen to occur in India only. It does not occur in Makkah or Madinah or any of the Islamic countries. This fact would tend to support theory that this bid'at is an offshoot of the Hindu celebrations of Diwali. The Muslims of India being in close contact with the Hindus probably began imitating them in their practices, thus resulting in the introduction of this and various other bidats - Ma-Thabata-bis-Sunnah p.215

Nabi **[Sallallahu-Alayhi-Wasallam]** said: "He who imitates a nation is from amongst them." - Abu Dawood p.215
It is thus necessary that Muslims completely abstain from such practices. Expending money in this direction would be Haraam and should children be given money for purchasing firecrackers then the parents will be answerable for this.
Shah Sahib, after throwing some light on the history of this practice writes further that the Ulama have slammed the practice of burning extra lights on specific nights as an evil bid'at indeed.
Ali bin Ebrahim has said that the Baraamika, a sect belonging to the Majoos (Fire-Worshippers) were in fact responsible for the initiation of this Bid'at. Upon accepting Islam they began practising such things considering them as Sunnat. The object was that together with making sajdah with the Muslims they would also be worshipping fire. Then some Imaams and leaders used this innovation in order to gather people in large numbers under the pretext of special namazes, etc. Having gathered a crowd they would then attempt to establish their leadership and control over the people. In the beginning of the 8th. century Hijri the Ulema-e-Haqq began denouncing this strange practice and it was thus abolished from Egypt and Syria.
- Ma-Thabata-Bis-Sunnah p.216.

It is indeed a tragedy when one considers the fact that a study of the **Ahadith that** have passed earlier on in the book reveal quite clearly that **Rasulullah [Sallallahu-Alayhi-Wasallam]** didn't even have a single lantern in his home on the night of Bara'at. Yet his Ummah and those who profess love for him, consider the act of burning lights on this occasion to be one of great virtue and merit.

2. PREPARING OF SWEETMEATS:
Some people consider this as being compulsory. Without it there can be no Shabe-Bara'at for them. This is also absolutely baseless. Some say that this act gains significance from the fact that on the occasion of Uhud when the blessed tooth of **Rasulullah [Sallallahu-Alayhi-Wasallam]** became Shaheed, he had some halwa. Others say that Hazrat Hamza **[Radiyallahu-Anhum]** was matyred on this day and the sweetmeats are taken as his "Faatiha" (in commemoration of him). These are fabricated and concocted theories. How can it ever be possible when it is known fact that the battle of Uhud in which Hazrat Hamza was martyred took place in Shawwaal and not Sha'baan?

3. SOULS VISIT FAMILIES
Some people firmly believe that on Shabe-Bara'at the souls of the deceased visit the families' homes and see whether any food has been prepared in their honour or not. Some feel that if a person dies before Shabe-Bara'at and until his "Fatihah" is not made on Shabe-Bara'at, he is not counted amongst the dead. These are baseless ideologies that clearly contradict the Ahadith.

4. DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD
Some feel that it is compulsory to distribute food on this night with the intention of Isale-Sawab. There is no link between this practice and the significance of this night. Any virtuous act could be carried out without considering it as specific to this night. This custom should also be avoided. One could easily feed on any other day or night for that matter. Furthermore, no other special acts of charity etc. have been prescribed for this night - Fatawa Imdadiyyah V.4/P.27.

5. HADITH ON RAJAB, SHA'BAAN AND RAMADHAN
Some people quote the following narration in their lectures:
Rasulullah [Sallallahu-Alayhi-Wasallam] said: "Rajab is Allah's month, Sha'baan is my month and Ramadhan is the month of my Ummah."
It should be noted that this "Hadith" is a fabrication - Akhbaare-Mowdhoo' P.329

O Allah! show us that which is Haqq(Truth) and cause us to follow it and show us that which is Baatil(False) and cause us to abstain from it. May Allah shower his choisest blessings upon the best of His creation, Hazrat Muhammed **[Sallallahu-**

Alayhi-Wasallam] and upon his Companions, his descendants and upon his entire Ummah. Aameen. All praise is due to Allah in the beginning and in the end.

Fazlur-Rahman A'azami
26 Jumaadal-Ukhra 1413-21 December 1992

HADITH

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:
"The whole Ummah will enter Jannah, but those who denied." He was asked, "Ya Rasulullah, who are the deniers?" He replied, Whosoever follows me will enter Jannah and whosoever disobeys me, has denied." (Bukhari / Muslim)

"On the Fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah bestows his special attention on His entire creation. He then pardons His entire creation except an idolater and one who harbours enmity".

(Hadeeth)

The basic aim of presenting this book is to clearly elucidate the benefit and virtues of *Ibaadat*, offering Specific Prescribed *Salaat*, visiting of Graveyard, during this auspicious night with strong evidence in the light of *Ahadeeth*.